



ABLE BC
FOR A RESPONSIBLE CANNABIS INDUSTRY

July 3, 2024

City of Surrey
13450 – 104 Avenue
Surrey, BC
V3T 1V8

VIA EMAIL

RE: Cannabis Retail in Surrey - Policy Framework and Application Process (Corporate Report No: R055 File: 3900-20)

Mayor Brenda Locke and Council,

On behalf of BC's Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC) cannabis retail members, I am writing to express our continued support of the City of Surrey's decision to permit legal cannabis retail licensees within your community.

As policy experts in the responsible sale of regulated substances, ABLE BC advocates for business-friendly cannabis policies that grow local economies, support diverse communities, and grow small businesses. We collaborate with government partners to ensure the success of legal cannabis retailers throughout BC and to tackle the illicit supply of unregulated and potentially dangerous cannabis.

As the City of Surrey prepares to allow legal cannabis retail, we respectfully submit the following perspective for your consideration.

1. Ensure all 12 permitted stores are fulfilled by private retailers

We encourage the City of Surrey to ensure licenses for all 12 permitted stores are granted.

We are concerned that if fewer than 12 stores open the City's large population will be underserved, allowing illicit cannabis operations to thrive.

By ensuring all 12 stores permitted under the current framework are used in the initial implementation, the City will successfully address illicit operation issues.

2. RFEOI Scoring Process: clarification & more points to the related experience criteria

City of Surrey staff recommend 25 points be attributed to the related experience criteria of the RFEOI Scoring Process. This criterion is aligned with our fundamental value of ensuring the responsible sale of regulated substances.

We ask that City staff clarify how this criterion will be evaluated. In our view, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Number of years of responsible retail experience of similarly regulated substances (i.e. liquor or cannabis);
- Related retail experience (cannabis or liquor) in other municipalities;
- Proven experience of operating in compliance with the terms and conditions of a license.

3. Confirm a timeline to review the current framework

ABLE BC understands the need for an initial implementation of 12 cannabis stores to prevent market saturation. However, we believe additional legal cannabis retail stores will be needed to meet the demands of Surrey's large population and geographic area. Ensuring an adequate number of legal stores is the best way to serve your community and compete with the illicit market.

We ask the City of Surrey to review the current framework in one year to determine an expansion plan. We have seen success in other jurisdictions when Council includes a review timeline in their policy framework. Reviewing the policy in one year ensures accountability and fairness for new businesses and operators who may seek to enter the market.

4. Eligibility map for applicants

As cannabis retail applicants are currently seeking potential location leases and preparing to submit applications, ABLE BC encourages the City of Surrey to take a business-friendly approach and provide a clear map that highlights specifically which properties or areas would be eligible for cannabis retail. In other communities, we have found this approach allows applicants to better plan the development of their business and save unnecessary costs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jeff@ablebc.ca or 604-499-2566.

Sincerely,



Jeff Guignard
Executive Director
ABLE BC